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Opposition to Governor's Proposed Budget; regarding Elementary and Secondary Education funding cuts to small towns

To Members of the Appropriations Committee,

I oppose the proposed cuts to Education Cost Share funds proposed in the Governor's Budget. Our town struggles annually to pass an education budget that is fiscally responsible, adequately educates our students and doesn't impose a higher tax burden than most citizens are willing to accept. This requires a great deal of effort, negotiation, and frequently multiple referendums.

With the Governor's proposed budget, the Town of Colchester's revenues will be reduced by about \$4 million dollars. That is about 10% of our current approximately \$40 million dollar budget for education. This increase won't be tolerated by our community that votes down increases of 1 or 2%. Instead, an already stripped down education system will be gutted in order to make the numbers work. This is not acceptable.

Additionally, pushing the State retirement system costs for teachers to local communities is shameful. The State should be responsible for these expenses; not local communities. After all, it is supposed to be a State system.

I urge you all to please reject these impositions on small towns that work hard to be fiscally responsible. Look at alternative revenue sources that have been identified by groups such as Connecticut Voices for Children to help close the gap. Our current budget woes should not be born by future generations. Children deserve a local education system that can meet their needs and prepare them for college or career so that they can build up our future not be a further drain on it.

Thank you for your consideration.